

Love to Mrs. Garrison, and the younger
members of the household, in which I trust
cordially united.

Wayland Dec. 27th, 1863.

Friend Garrison,

178

Your request troubles
me a good deal. I have a strong desire
to oblige old, much-respected, and much-
loved friends; but my judgment goes so
entirely against continuing these Receptions,
that I do not see how it is possible for
me to consent to have my name used
in connection with them. People are
not satisfied with them. They complain,
very justly, that they are neither one thing
nor the other. If there is an attempt to
have refreshments, they are gobbled up by
those who go merely to eat good things
gratis, and who make a very disagreeable
scene of confusion and litter. If singing
or speaking is attempted, there is too
much noise and disturbance to admit

of hearing with any satisfaction, and if they attempt to walk round and talk, the seats are in the way, and they are soon called to order, to listen to something from the platform, which, after all, they are unable to hear.

As for the ladies, who purport to receive the guests, they are so constantly hurried with introductions, and the receiving and entering of money, that there are no moments for conversation with anybody. To me, it is one of the most unpleasant scenes that I ever mingled in; but I would not mind that, if I did not know, by remarks from all sorts of people, that it is so to others.

That being the case, it shows that people who go, do it mainly from a wish to contribute to the funds of the Anti-Slavery Society; and they would bring in their money, without going through the form of a reception which is

no reception.

Why not simply announce that at such an hour, in such a Hall, George Thompson will address the friends of the cause for one half hour; ^{or} that Wendell Phillips will address them for one half hour; that Andrew T. Foss will explain the pecuniary needs of the society, at this time, for fifteen minutes; that John Brown will be sung to the piano, and then people can walk round and talk till they choose to disperse; that three people will be seated at tables near the platform to receive such contributions as the friends will give to carry on the work. Seats might be placed round the sides of the hall, for rest, and a large space left in the middle for walking about and talking. I mention Mr. Foss as the one to briefly explain the pecuniary

needs of the Society, because he would be likely to do it humorously, in a way to make people smile.

I doubt, and have long doubted the wisdom of trying to sustain the Standard by extra efforts. It is a good and well conducted paper; but if it cannot sustain itself, I think it had better unite with some other paper. I know your objection to having the Liberator united with it, because you don't want to be the organ of a Society; but is the Standard, in reality, the organ of a Society, at the present time?

The plain fact is, that the war has sucked in nearly all the anti-slavery feeling of the country; and the pecuniary demands for that are so incessant, and so immense, that only a few crumbs are left to nourish the old fashioned anti-slavery. The whole programme has changed, and we cannot go on in the old grooves. Decidedly, it seems to me that the form of Receptions had better be given up.

Yours with true respect and affection,
L. M. Child,